

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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DRAFTED BY ARA/ECA:DVANTREECK:AF
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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, EAID, PA

SUBJECT: DOMINGO LAINO PRESS STATEMENT

REF: WHITE-KAY TELCON 6/5/78; ASUNCION 2143 ASUNCION 2135

1) THE FOLLOWING IS THE VOA REPORT OF LAINO'S PRESS CON-
FERENCE:

INTRO: AN OFFICIAL OF THE OPPOSITION HAS STRONGLY
CRITICIZED PARAGUAY'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND GOVERN-
MENTAL CORRUPTION. VOA'S RACHAEL BAIL HAS A REPORT FROM
WASHINGTON.

TEXT: DOMINGO LAINO, VICE PRESIDENT OF PARAGUAY'S
LIBERAL-RADICAL PARTY, TOLD A WASHINGTON NEWS CONFERENCE
THAT PARAGUAY IS ONE OF THE MOST CORRUPT GOVERNMENTS IN
LATIN AMERICA, AND HE SAID IT'S VERY DEBATABLE WHETHER
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AID TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT GETS TO THE POOR WHO NEED IT.

DOCTOR LAINO PREDICTED THAT THE OPPOSITION PARTIES COULD
DEFEAT PRESIDENT ALFREDO STROESSNER IN FREE ELECTIONS.
THE OPPOSITION LEADER CHARGED THAT GENERAL STROESSNER--
WHO TOOK POWER TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO --HAS CHANGED THE
CONSTITUTION AND THE ELECTION LAWS SO THAT HE ALWAYS WINS.

IN A PREPARED STATEMENT, HE DESCRIBED PARAGUAY'S GOVERNMENT AS THE OLDEST MILITARY DICTATORSHIP IN LATIN AMERICA--AND CALLED ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO END THE MASSIVE SUPPORT THE REGIME HAS RECEIVED.

DOCTOR LAINO PRAISED THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY TOWARD PARAGUAY--SAYING IT OPENED UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE OPPOSITION. HE NOTED THAT AID HAS BEEN REDUCED, THE UNITED STATES HAS VOTED AGAINST LOANS FOR PARAGUAY IN THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AND HAS CRITICIZED PARAGUAY'S HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES.

HE SAID TWENTY-FIVE POLITICAL PRISONERS HAVE DIED IN RECENT YEARS AND THERE HAVE BEEN MANY CASES OF TORTURE. BUT HE NOTED THAT WHILE THERE ONCE WERE HUNDREDS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, THERE ARE NOW ONLY FIFTY OR SIXTY. CONDITIONS IN PRISONS HAVE IMPROVED--AND THE STATE OF SEIGE NOW COVERS ONLY THE CAPITAL CITY--ASUNCION.

DOCTOR LAINO EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE JUNE ASSEMBLY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES WILL STRONGLY CENSURE BOTH PARAGUAY AND URUGUAY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES. THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION HAS COMPILED REPORTS ON BOTH COUNTRIES--CHARGING THEM WITH VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS.
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THE RADICAL-LIBERAL PARTY LEADER CALLED FOR A RETURN TO A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN PARAGUAY, A COMPLETE LIFTING OF THE STATE OF SEIGE, REINSTATEMENT OF PRESS FREEDOM AND AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS.

2) THERE IS NO TEXT OF HIS REMARKS AS HE SPOKE EXTEMPORANEOUSLY TO THE PRESS. WE WILL POUCH TWO PRESS RELEASES SUMMARIZING LAINO'S REMARKS. VANCE

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